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Peace groups call for more government, church action against nuclear weapons

Alan Doerksen

WATERLOO, Ont. — Since the end of the Cold War, governments and the general public have largely ignored the issue of nuclear disarmament. But peace activists believe that nuclear weapons are still a serious threat to human survival.

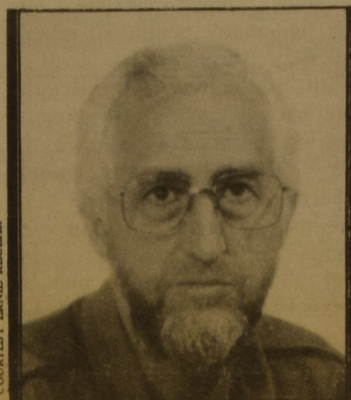
Ernie Regehr, policy and public affairs director of Project Ploughshares, has an explanation for the lack of public attention focused on nuclear disarmament. "The public is aware significant nuclear disarmament agreements have been reached," says Regehr. "There's a feeling the issue has been dealt with....

The priority attention has switched to conventional wars."

But nuclear weapons are very much a threat, Regehr insists. One danger is that terrorist groups could steal nuclear weapons and use them to attack their enemies. Weapons deteriorating in countries such as Russia also pose a threat to the environment.

Large stockpiles

At this point, the U.S. and Russia possess the most nuclear weapons, says Regehr. According to Project Ploughshares figures, the U.S. still has 12,500 warheads, down from a peak of



Ernie Regehr

24,000 in the 1980s. The number of warheads Russia possesses is harder to estimate but

is probably 4500, states Ploughshares. Britain and France have much smaller nuclear arsenals with 260 and 450 warheads respectively. China, India, Israel and a few other countries have nuclear warheads but government secrecy makes it harder to estimate their numbers.

Court ruling hopeful

Because of the continuing threat posed by stockpiled nuclear weapons, groups like Project Ploughshares and Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) continue to promote nuclear disarmament.

In the past, governments of

various countries have made commitments to reduce their nuclear stockpiles.

Regehr notes, "There's quite an interest in international NGOs [non-governmental organizations] in mounting campaigns to get governments to pay attention to those commitments. The last major event along these lines was the International Court [of Justice] decision which questioned the legality of nuclear weapons."

In 1996, millions of peace activists signed a petition asking the International Court of Justice to speak out against nuclear

See PEACE page 2...

School offers 'Abbotsford' for sale

James Kwantes

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — If the "Game of Abbotsford" turns out to be as big a hit in Abbotsford as Monopoly was in North America, the Abbotsford Christian School Society will reap a fundraising bonanza.

The society — which runs a high school and two elementary schools housing 1,200 students — produced the Monopoly-like board game as a fundraiser for a \$4.5 million high school expansion completed a year ago.

Game players can buy up squares occupied by local businesses, while collecting wheel-dealer cards and suffering through Revenue Canada tax audits.

"The object of the game is to buy up all of Abbotsford," said Henry Contant, director of development for the society.

Contant got the idea for the game from a development conference for the Society of Christian Schools in B.C. Bulkley Valley Christian School in Smithers used the game idea as a successful fundraiser last year,

he said.

The Abbotsford Christian School Society raised \$19,000

by selling squares on the board to local businesses. The squares — which ranged in price from



Janine Slofstra and Ryan Delange, students at Abbotsford Christian Secondary School, enjoy the new "Game of Abbotsford."

\$500 to \$1,200 — were snapped up quickly, said Contant.

Easy sell

"It wasn't that difficult to sell the spaces. It's name recognition: every time you land on that space, you say the name," he explained.

That money paid for the production of 1,000 games by an American company, so all profits from the sale of the games will go towards debt reduction. The games will be marketed through the school and through a local store and mall.

The owner of one popular Abbotsford games store offered to stock the game and pass on all the profits to the school.

The games sell for \$25 each.

The idea of the game was ap-

pealing because it involved community dollars and businesses in the school's fundraising, said Contant.

"A lot of people will buy the game, not to support the school, but because it looks like a fun game," he said. "It's something new, it's not chocolate bars. That sort of appealed to us."

The society hopes to raise some \$25,000 by selling the games.

More good ideas

For the Christian school system, one of Canada's largest, the idea is the latest in a series of innovative fundraising campaigns that have raised more than \$4 million in the past five years.

See BOARD page 3...

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Peace groups urge Christians to speak up

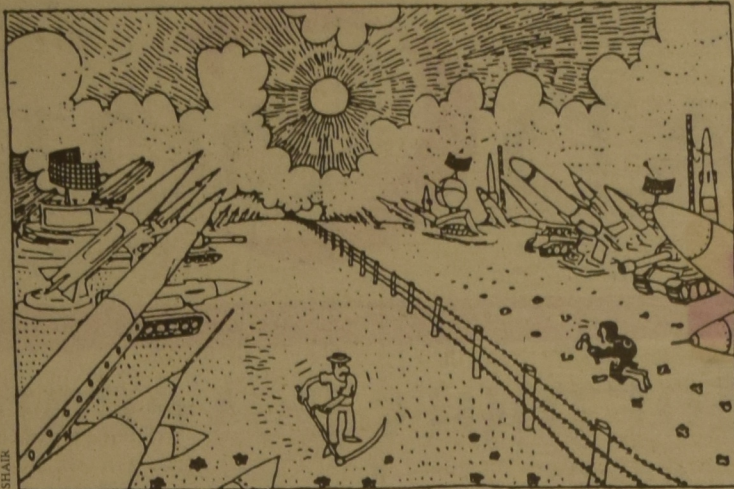
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weapons. The court responded by saying that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is "contrary to the rule of international law in armed conflict ... except in extreme circumstances of self-defence in which the very survival of the state would be at stake," reports Margaret Boyce, a member of VOW living in Gravenhurst, Ont.

Boyce admits that the exception "leaves a hole big enough to drive a tank through for those inclined to use it," but she considers the opinion "a strong moral tool in the struggle for abolishing these weapons."

On the fence

VOW and other groups, including the United Church of Canada, have called on the Canadian government to comply with the court opinion, says Boyce, who is on a peace and justice working group with the Toronto conference of the United Church. But so far, the government has "sat on the fence.... They don't come out



and say what they're going to do with it." The International Court is "a moral force..., but people ignore it all the time," admits Boyce.

Boyce believes the public is now ignoring nuclear disarmament because many people have gotten "issue fatigue." Other causes, such as the environmental movement, have drawn public attention away from nuclear weapons, suggests Boyce. The end of the Cold War

and the fact that several countries have destroyed many of their nuclear weapons has also led many people to ignore this issue, she says.

But she agrees with Regehr that such weapons still pose a serious threat. For instance, in the former Soviet Union, "there's a lot of fear they may get into the hands of rogue elements." Boyce also believes Israel may possess nuclear weapons that could pose a threat

to peace in the Middle East.

Although the American military has gotten rid of some of its nuclear arsenal, Boyce says the Pentagon continues to develop more modern nuclear weapons and is still conducting underground nuclear tests.

Boyce admits some Christians believe nuclear weapons are an acceptable means of defence. But she believes such people have not thought deeply enough about the issue.

Boyce urges concerned Christians to write to their Members of Parliament or Congress members about nuclear disarmament to show "it's still an important issue." She also believes special events need to be used to raise public awareness of this issue.

Poignant reminder

One example is an exhibit of photos currently on display in Toronto. It details the aftermath of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War, "to remind people of the scale and scope of nuclear warfare,

and its results," explains Boyce.

Several peace groups, such as VOW, Ploughshares and Veterans Against Nuclear Arms are presenting the exhibit, which will be accompanied by prayer vigils by Anglicans, Quakers and Catholics and members of other religions, such as Bahais, Buddhists and Muslims.

Project Ploughshares has urged the government to take a "bolder stand" on nuclear weapons, says Regehr. He says that Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy is "basically very supportive of action on nuclear disarmament," but says Axworthy is "under constraints because of relationships with the U.S." But Regehr has been encouraged by Axworthy's tough stand against landmines.

Ploughshares also wants to get churches to take a more active stand against nuclear weapons. On Dec. 10, Ploughshares will meet with leaders of Canadian churches to discuss nuclear disarmament and to put together a letter to the Prime Minister about the issue.

Physics profs warn of continuing nuclear threat

Alan Doerksen

EDMONTON — Some Christian physicists are concerned about the lack of public interest about the continuing threat of nuclear weapons and would like to see more action taken toward disarmament.

Wytze Brouwer, a professor of physics at the University of

Alberta in Edmonton, is a past member of Project Ploughshares who was active in the peace movement during the 1980s. But he admits, "I've relaxed the past five years on the issue."

Nuclear disarmament "doesn't grab the headlines anymore," says Brouwer. But, he cautions, "I don't think the world is necessarily safer."

CRC opinion

In recent years, much progress has been made toward disarmament, says Brouwer. "A lot of the former nuclear states have given up the right to have nuclear weapons. Canada has given up the right to carry nuclear weapons itself."

But there are still risks. One is that Russia could get a right-

wing nationalistic government in the future that wants to rebuild that country's nuclear arsenal, Brouwer asserts.

He would like to see churches and peace groups take a more active stand against nuclear weapons. Peace groups should "tell the public the danger is great." During the 1980s, peace groups could easily attract public attention to the threat of nuclear weapons because of factors such as Ronald Reagan's perceived threat of Russia's "evil empire," and the "Star Wars" program he initiated in response.

Brouwer, who is Christian Reformed, believes that many in his denomination favor the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent to war. He is disturbed by

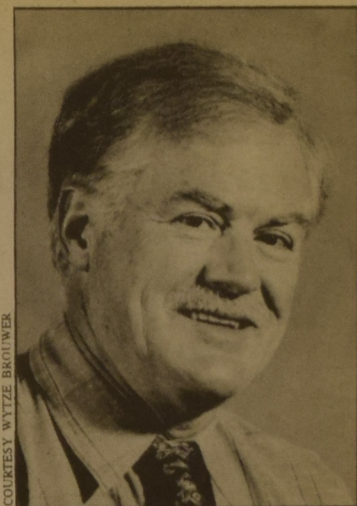
this, and encourages Christians to ask: "What would Christ do in this case?"

Brouwer would also like the Canadian government to take a stronger stand against nuclear weapons by putting pressure on the U.S. and other countries to reduce their nuclear stockpiles. He believes Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy takes the nuclear threat seriously but has been focusing on eliminating landmines because it is an issue with a solution that is easier to achieve.

Physical, political instability

Brian Martin, a physics professor at The King's University College, agrees with Brouwer that peace groups should raise public awareness of the continued threat posed by nuclear weapons. "I don't think there's the perceived danger there was 15 years ago, [but] I don't think there's been a significant reduction of weapons," says Martin. "There may be the assumption the status quo is the safest. I don't think it is."

Nuclear weapons stored in the former Soviet Union pose several threats, says Martin. One is that several countries now possess the weapons that were



Wytze Brouwer

once controlled by the Soviet government. This makes it difficult to extend arms reduction treaties signed by the former Soviet Union. Weapons that have been stored for a long time there may spread radioactive waste or may be stolen by terrorist groups. Political instability among the former Soviet states is another risk, says Martin.

He urges Christians to write to their MP or the defence minister and ask if Canada is pursuing any initiatives to reduce nuclear weapons worldwide.

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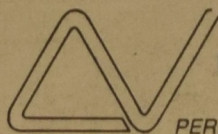
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Study skills

Once again it is mid-term time at colleges and universities throughout the country. First year students, who were beginning to think that post-secondary schooling has few demands and a lot of student freedom, are now realizing that their professors do expect them to read, question and think about all that they have been assigned to do in the last few months.

They suddenly find themselves being held accountable for explanations missed in their skipped classes and, as the work pressures increase, they decide that they will never skip a class again.

Watching their faces as I return their marginally passed tests back to them, I ache to give them the magic key that will unlock the secret to academic success for them. Except that there is no magic key. Studying involves work, conscientious habits and refined study skills.



College is no less a "real world" where work and effort count than the "real world" of business, banking, construction, medical care, social service, etc. The one difference is that in the world of paid work we assume that the worker needs skills training; in the college world we assume that the student has come to the post-secondary level with developed skills.

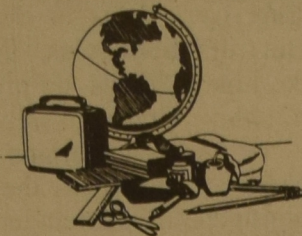
'Preaching to the converted'

At The King's, there are "how-to-study" sessions for new students at the beginning of every school year. However, these seminars are given before students are aware that they may be in need of such training. What we should do is to set aside a few hours for study skills seminars after the first set of mid-terms.

Unfortunately, the same thing could happen then that happened in anxiety de-sensitization sessions for highly anxious test-taking students at the University of Alberta. Those students who were most in need of the de-sensitization were also too anxious to take the time off from their studying for such sessions. Most likely those who are most in need of study skills training will not allow themselves time off from frantic studying to become more skillful.

Maybe we should build some study skill accountability into every course. But what would this accountability measure look like? Would

Pedagogeries



Alyce Oosterhuis

college accountability be different from their previous high school experience?

My high school history teacher used to begin every class with three questions and then he would proceed to read the answers in point form (a, b, c, d) from our textbooks. We had to underline the points in our texts and we had to write them out in our notebooks. The following day he would randomly call on three individuals who would have to answer the addressed question with the verbatim answers of a, b, c, d, etc.

We feared this teacher and memorized our text and notes frantically before his classes and tests. I learned how to memorize but I did not learn to love history. However, I did learn the study skills of: a) marking crucial passages; b) summarizing arguments; c) taking concise notes; d) re-reading information before heading to class; e) doing homework faithfully.

Need external incentives?

Maybe I should construct the first semester for first-year college students to be more consistent with their previous schooling experiences: weekly quizzes, marking daily assignments; proving that they have read the chapters or articles before they do dismal work on their mid-terms; showing me their notes; calling on them randomly to answer pre-assigned questions.

The problem with these accountability measures is that they assume the student needs daily external incentives to study and organize his/her time. Shouldn't 18-year-old college students be expected to be self-motivated enough to succeed? Since college is beyond the 12 years of mandatory schooling, shouldn't we assume that these students are here because they are motivated to do well?

In answering my last question I ought to step beyond my high school years and recall what it was like to be a 17-year-old away from home for the first time: independence; loneliness; new friends; heartbreaks; an understanding prof; a super-strict dean of women; a boring course; a nerve-wracking experience.

Maybe, instead of wanting to structure the college students' homework time and assignment completion, I should allow them the time and opportunity to struggle with their new adulthood and be confident of their ability to pick up the requisite skills before the December finals. After all, most students do eventually pass to the next level of courses, and many graduate very honorably without too much coddling from their profs.

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis teaches education and psychology to BA and B.Ed. students at The King's University College in Edmonton.

Board game helps school's debt reduction

... continued from page 1

The board games first went on sale at the school system's annual fundraising auction on Oct. 10, which itself raised \$75,000 towards debt reduction.

The auction is a popular event that attracts people from both inside and outside the Christian school community.

"It allows everybody to get involved at their own level," said Contant, "from the grandmother who bakes a raisin loaf that sells for \$300 to the youngster who raises a calf and sells it at the auction."

One hand-painted milkcan was bid on 20 times and raised thousands of dollars for the school. But deals could also be discovered for the bargain-hunter.

In the 16 years since the auctions began, more than \$1 million has been raised to retire

debt.

Another successful initiative was the sale of a parcel of land to a developer, which raised about \$1 million for the schools.

The society took a parcel of land through municipal rezoning before selling it to a residential developer, who built on 26 lots.

Pledges honored

The largest fundraising drive in recent years was an extensive capital campaign in 1994. Members of the school society were visited by volunteers and asked to make a three-year pledge towards debt reduction.

A total of \$2 million was raised, and people are honoring their pledges as the last bit of money comes in, Contant reports.

"It's a real credit to the community," he said.

CRWRC responds to Mexican disaster

Keith Knight

BURLINGTON, Ont. — Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) is responding immediately to the devastation in Mexico caused by Hurricane Pauline. At least 500 are dead, 2,500 are missing and more than 300,000 are homeless.

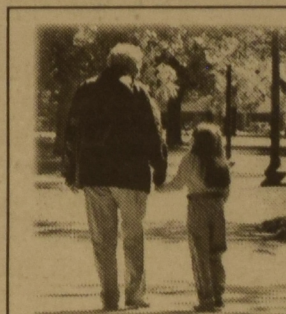
Hardest hit are the Oaxaca and Guerrero states, where crops have been destroyed and where it is predicted that thousands may starve to death.

CRWRC has committed to provide \$50,000 in the short term for reconstruction and seed planting. The seed is available in the country and the farmers know the best types to plant in each area. The need, therefore, is for funds to purchase the seed.

The agency has already responded with a \$4,000 gift to a diaconal committee in Acapulco to fulfill immediate urban needs. CRWRC will undertake a needs assessment to determine the nature and extent of long-term funding.

CRWRC will carry out its relief work in Mexico in co-operation with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the National Presbyterian Church, and Amextra.

CRWRC is currently undertaking fundraising among donors and Christian Reformed congregations in southwestern United States. CRWRC-Canada Director Wayne deJong says there "does not appear to be a need for a Canadian appeal at this time."



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Editorials

The classical Greeks did not know about forgiveness

A few weeks ago I saw the third-last Stratford, Ont., performance of the Greek classical play *Oedipus Rex* as translated by poet William Butler Yeats. My companions and I thoroughly enjoyed the excellent acting, the exquisite masks and costumes and the pathos of the play. But what really fascinated me was the exposition of the classical Greek mind as revealed in this play by Sophocles, who lived a few hundred years before Christ.

What struck me was the contrast between Greek thinking and Judeo-Christian thinking.

In the play, the oracle of Delphi predicts that Oedipus will kill his father and marry his mother. When Oedipus learns about this prophecy he tries to avoid his fate by leaving those whom he thinks are his biological parents but are in fact his adoptive parents. On the way to Thebes he is harassed by a small party of men and ends up killing all but one of them. Fate has it that one of the men he killed was his biological father.

Oedipus arrives in Thebes and is able to solve a riddle posed by a sphinx that kills all

those who are unable to solve the riddle. Oedipus solves the riddle, and the sphinx is destroyed by the correct answer. Out of gratitude, the inhabitants of Thebes make him their king, and he marries the queen, who turns out to be his mother.

The god Apollo is angry with Thebes because the city harbors a person who committed patricide and incest; Apollo sends a plague to the city. Eventually the truth of the whole situation comes out and Oedipus becomes an "untouchable." He ends up sticking out his own eyes and his mother/wife kills herself, all to pacify Apollo.

This is how the Greek mind dealt with the problem of good and evil. What is good about the play is that there is a strong sense of moral outrage when evil is committed. But there is no forgiveness possible here. People who have committed evil are shunned because others fear the wrath of Apollo. There is no escaping, either, what a prophecy has determined will happen. From the beginning Oedipus had no chance. This is not about a moral choice as in Shakespeare's tragedies, for example. King Lear may lament: "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;/ They kill us for their sport," but he had only himself to blame. Human beings in *Oedipus Rex* however are at

the mercy of capricious gods.

It is in this setting, a few centuries after Sophocles, that the Apostle Paul came to Athens to proclaim the message of the one God who is not capricious, who offers people a choice, and is willing to forgive them when they make the wrong choice.

God's anger was poured out on Jesus Christ on our behalf. As a result people need not be afraid to touch those who have sinned in a spectacular way. What liberation this must have been for the people of Athens who accepted Paul's strange teachings about "Jesus and the resurrection" (see Acts 17: 16-34).

It still is liberating today. Today, good and evil are much less clearly defined. But we have our own way of deciding who's politically acceptable and who is not. People are resorting to horoscopes for predictions about the future and have a sense of powerlessness over against the forces around them. People don't know how to forgive anymore. It seems as if the Greek mind is making a partial comeback.

Perhaps people today will say, like the Athenians: "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean." Are we ready to give them an account? **BW**

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Blessed are the non-cable television viewers

An editorial cartoon in the *Globe and Mail*, featuring a huge potato with sprouts instead of limbs and a Canadian flag planted firmly in the spud, reads: "Proud, visionary and united, jubilant Canadians celebrate 16 new cable channels." The irony almost drips. This is the age of multiple choice and the "visionary" couch potato.

A radio host put in his two-cents worth of wit when he commented on the multiplicity of television channels providing the viewer with yet more variations on inane sitcoms, vapid talk shows and insipid serials. His response: "Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink." That just about sums it up. Why bother multiplying what is not drinkable?

Choice of the restless

What our society needs like an aperture in the uppermost part of the human body is more choice. I remember how frustrated a Romanian immigrant I know became when he realized that in order to become a computer expert he could take a dozen different routes. He could go to university, to community college, to night school, to business school, take correspondence courses or on-the-job training with numerous companies. Rather than rejoice at the legion of opportunities, he dispaired. What to do! In Romania there was only one

route to computer proficiency. Choice is good, of course; but too much choice can make you restless and unfocused.

The same can be said about religion. "How shall the young direct their way? What light shall be their perfect guide?" Well, let's see, there's Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and agnosticism, for starters. And within Christianity there are hundreds of options to suit the Christian consumer's taste.

Back to the additional specialty channels.... My wife and I have inadvertently solved the problem of "future shock" (Alvin Toffler) by hanging on to our rotating roof antenna (actually, the *antenna* rotates, not the roof, and it hangs onto our house, rather than us hanging onto it). With this antiquated contraption we can successfully pull in about a 14 stations, two of which are education channels. We have all the choice we need. Nothing that the cable company does affects us.

*There's no monthly bill and no sitcom overkill.
There's no expansion thrill, no viewer's frill.
But for good or ill, we triumph still ...*

mainly because our choice is limited.

Pity the poor cable potato, lost in a sea of choice. And of mediocrity and superficiality there shall be no end. **BW**

A white funeral taught me another perspective

Marcia Geisterfer's article about the plight of Haitian women ("Birthing Pains"), drew my attention largely because for more than a decade I have been sponsoring, through World Vision, a girl in Haiti.

Some sentences such as "So many babies die before the age of four that mothers learn almost instinctively not to become too attached to their offspring," and "You can only grieve so many before a protective numbness sets in" reminded me of Philippe

Aries's influential book *Centuries of Childhood. A Social History of Family Life* and Lawrence Stone's *Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*.

Discomfort

That is not bad company to be in. Yet the biblical story of David fasting for his dying son born as the result of his adultery with Bathsheba has always made me uncomfortable with the claim of parental disinterest.

And I am not the only one feeling uncomfortable with Aries's and Stone's claim.

Michael McDonald has indeed taken a quite different perspective in *Mystical Bedlam*. If MacDonald is right, as I think he is, then I have to wonder if Marcia actually saw what she thought she saw. Was grief expressed at another time, at another place?

Women who experience stillbirth express their pain and grief in a different way — as a recent

article in *Christian Courier* indicated. Even those who experience abortion are often not indifferent.

Western eyes

Marcia raises valid issues, but I wonder if what she saw was not seen through Western eyes. In a sense she admits that when stating that she had "grown up to believe that... death [was] a time for mourning." I grew up in the same way until the funeral of Dutch Queen

Wilhelmina. It was not in the sombre black I was used to, but in white. That provided me with a different perspective.

If Marcia had had this "white perspective" would she have concluded that the reaction of these Haitian women would have been one of indifference? Maybe nine weeks is not enough to learn to see and interpret the emotions of people in a different culture.

Bert den Boggende
Lacombe, Alta.

An American View

Truths are not always self-evident

Tony Campolo

Recently, a study was made comparing American mothers with mothers in Japan. Among the many questions that were asked, the one that proved most intriguing was this one: "What do you want your children to be when they grow up?" Just about every Japanese mother answered this question with the same word: "Successful!"

Driven by success

The answer was not surprising, because there is no society on the face of the earth that drives its children to be successful as do the people of Japan. I am not advising that we imitate them. Any acquaintance with the children of Japan will reveal them to be some of the most depressed children of the world. Their parents so constantly drive them to be successful that Japanese children, especially in their teenage years, often seem burdened and devoid of joy.

In contrast, when American mothers were asked what they wanted their children to be when they grew up, the answer, not surprisingly was one word, "Happy!"

What concerned me as I read the study was that neither the typical Japanese mother nor the typical American mother gave the answer that you would have gotten from my mother. If you had asked her what she wanted me to be when I grew up, she would have answered: "Good."

Goodness transcends

Isn't that an interesting word? My mother would have wanted me to be successful, and she certainly would have wanted me to be happy. But transcending both success and happiness in her value system would have been

goodness. Her prayer for me was that "goodness and mercy would follow me all the days of my life, and that I might dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

No wonder our society is in trouble. It is imbued with the theme articulated in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, and we have become a people preoccupied with "the pursuit of happiness." With happiness as our goal, we give up on our marriages at the first sign of unhappiness. We are a people who embrace any new form of entertainment, whether moral or immoral, as long as we think it will make us happy. And we are ready to hold down two jobs and neglect the really important relationships of our lives in order to

earn the money to buy the things that somebody on a TV ad promised us would make us happy.

When I mentioned all of this to a friend, he quickly turned on me and said, "First you question the basic theme of the Declaration of Independence. I suppose the next thing you'll do is raise questions about the values set forth in the Constitution."

Where's responsibility

After some thought, I had to say, "Yes I do!" I do question the values laid out in the Constitution. While I think it lays down the principles that make for the best political system ever devised by men and women, the Constitution has one basic flaw. It clearly delineates the Bill of

Rights, but it nowhere states a Bill of Responsibilities."

I went on to make the case that a government that insures people of their rights but fails to clearly spell out their responsibilities fails to call them to be the kind of people God wants them to be. Americans are quick to scream if their rights are violated in any way, but all too few of us sense the deep responsibilities we have to each other as fellow citizens.

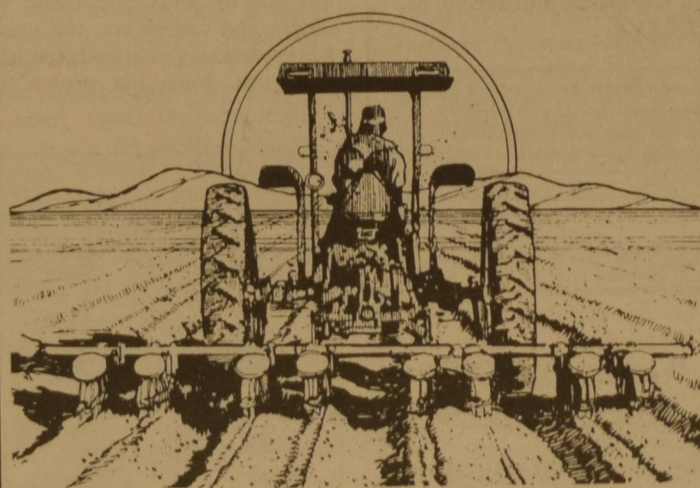
The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are among the greatest documents ever devised by human beings,

but they do not measure up to the divinely inspired Scriptures.

The Bible calls us to the goodness "that exalts a nation," and to the mutual responsibilities that we have if we are to truly be a people of God. When all is said and done, we must yield to the Word of God, because next to it, even the best words of people seem inadequate.

Dr. Anthony Campolo is president of Evangelical Association for the promotion of education, and a sociology professor at Eastern College in St. Davids, Pennsylvania.

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Praying for unconverted relatives and neighbors

Dear P & M:

Every day I pray for unconverted family members, like nephews and nieces in the Netherlands who have no interest in church. I'm talking about young adults who have been reared in a godly way. My question is this: Should I let them know that I pray for them? On previous occasions when I have had some contact with them I have talked about salvation, so they certainly know that I'm a Christian and why. By the way, this question also applies to my neighbors.

Dear Praying Aunt:

We commend you for including unconverted nephews, nieces and neighbors in your prayers. How many of us actually do this? You inspire us to think more carefully about our prayer list.

Since you know these persons, we think that you should go ahead and let them know that they are in your prayers. A card sent out of the blue might be a bit awkward, although not necessarily so. Perhaps the best approach is to catch their birthdays and include your message in a birthday card.

Whatever you write should be encouraging, not condemning. Warning them about the hell that awaits them if they don't accept Christ as Lord and Savior will not win their hearts. Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom to relay your thoughts and concerns "with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15). Knowing that a loving, Christian aunt cares enough to pray for them will mean more to your nephews and nieces than ten pages of theology. A local churchboard makes this very point: "One example is worth a thousand arguments."

An additional way to ensure that your prayers will be appreciated is to let them know that you are praying for their physical and emotional well-being, as well as their spiritual welfare. People who sense that you are interested in them as a whole rather than just a lost soul will be more appreciative of your prayers.

Peter and Marja



are IN

What a difference a relationship makes! In your case, your previous contact with your nephews and nieces gives you the "in" to reach out to them. Similarly, first befriending a neighbor or co-worker gives us the "in" to express our spiritual concerns to them. Marja, for example, has a good relationship with a colleague at her work. When he heard that he had cancer, Marja told him, "I want you to know that I will be praying for you every day." His response? "I'm not religious, but your support means a lot to me."

The parents of these straying young adults are probably hurting, too. Let these family members also know that you always pray for their children.

One last thought. We sometimes wrongly assume that lack of church attendance means absence of faith. While attendance is certainly a crucial indicator, we may not conclude that a person who avoids church does not believe anymore. Young people have let us know that just because they don't get anything out of going to church doesn't mean that they don't believe. We mention this so that you won't jump to the conclusion that your nephews and nieces no longer love the Lord. That may or may not be true. The fact is that sometimes it's the church that needs our prayers, because irrelevant preaching, perfunctory church attendance and self-absorbed church programs may be the real problems turning our youth away.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Ontario deacons extend service to other officebearers



PHOTO: LOWELL WITVOET

Claire Elgersma gets ready to lead a workshop on "Facing Unemployment and How the Church Can Help."

CC staff

HAMILTON, Ont. — The Diaconal Ministries in Eastern Canada lent its considerable expertise and organizing talent this year to expand its annual deacons training conference by including other officebearers in the Christian Reformed Church (see CC, Oct. 10). Billed as "a day of encouragement and training for deacons, elders and caregivers", the event drew 767 participants, 345 of them deacons.

Deacon attendance still up

"It was neat to see different officebearers come together," said co-ordinator Ben Vandezande. What was particularly gratifying for him was that in an attempt to serve the cause of elders and caregivers, the number of deacons in attendance had not gone down but grown, in

fact. He also appreciated that the elders in classes Niagara and Hamilton had decided not to hold a competing fall conference this year.

The 25 workshops were well attended, with an average attendance of 30 in each.

What stood out for elder Lowell Witvoet (Covenant CRC, St. Catharines) were the fellowship and the "reverent singing," the latter which he felt set the stage for the day. "It was so good to meet people who are ready to serve the Lord and who want to find out how they can do that," he said.

The conference was preceded by a satellite forum on the role of classis in supporting local ministry, which featured a presentation by Dr. Craig VanGelder who is professor of missions at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids, Mich.



Rev. Peter Nicolai, who gave a workshop on "The Use of Prayer and Scripture in Our Visits" overlooks a discussion by John Vanderkooy, Helen Verkuyl-Boyko, Jim Vanderleeuw and Cornelis Potstra.

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Church

'CRC leaders bound by synod'

Marian Van Til, with files from *Forum* and URNS

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Calvin Theological Seminary president Dr. James De Jong says that ordained Christian Reformed Church leaders should not publicly disagree with the CRC's 1973 synodical decision which condemns homosexual practice but calls for compassionate ministry to homosexuals. A recent issue of the seminary's newsletter, "Forum," dealt with this issue at length.

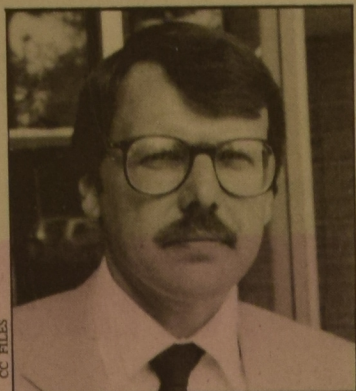
"The problem is that some voices in the church are speaking and acting like the 1973 position on homosexuality is optional," wrote De Jong.

"People are free to disagree with it," some claim, 'because we are not bound by synodical decisions.' So, some disagree openly — in personal conversations, on the Internet, in articles in church papers, perhaps even in classrooms or from the pulpit.... "These dissenters have a right to their opinions and to express them. By giving them a platform in the church the church tests its positions, learns, and moves forward." Even church leaders, office bearers, have claimed this right for themselves and for others."

Confusion

De Jong said it "confuses people when the church deals with such dissent in a vacillating or indifferent manner." He intends "to tackle head on the argument for the toleration of conflicting positions on homosexuality (homosexual sexual activity)."

DeJong noted that at the time of their ordination, Christian Reformed ministers, elders, and deacons sign the form of sub-



Dr. James De Jong

scription and promise "to teach, defend, and propagate this understanding of the faith" promulgated by CRC doctrinal standards. The church order considers synodical decisions to be "settled and binding" unless proved contrary to the church order or Scripture.

Acid of individualism

The church has a processes for revising decisions, De Jong reminded readers. "...All these mechanisms provide for orderly, thorough consideration by the church, thus for change that best protects and reflects the peace and harmony of the church. Until such considered change is approved, the church is bound by its existing doctrine and polity."

He said, "The notion that our church order or synodical decisions are merely advisory" arises from various sources, including "the acid of today's rampant individualism, which eats away the unity and mutual accountability of the body of Christ," as well as "perversity, pride, stubbornness, arrogance, or other spiritual weaknesses that remain too much a part of us."

The number of the beast

"This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight let him calculate the number of the beast for it is man's number. His number is 666" (NIV).

Revelation 13 deals with the beast out of the sea, which some identify with the Roman Empire and others with the final Antichrist who is to come before Christ's return. Whatever the correct interpretation, the beast is the symbol of satanic power opposed to God and his people.

The mysterious number 666 which was given to this beast has exercised the ingenuity of many interpreters, some hoping that the correct interpretation will provide a clue to the true historical identity of the beast. Most interpreters have assumed that the number is really a code for a name. Since letters had numerical values in both Hebrew and Greek it was possible to link a number with a name by adding up the numerical values of its constituent letters.

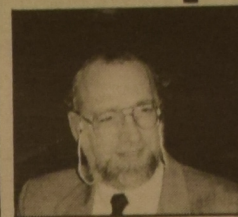
The name Luke, for example, is spelt "Loukas" in Greek, and corresponds to the number 721 (L=30, O=70, U=400, K=20, S=200; total 721). In this way every name had a number, and it was quite common in antiquity to use a number as a code for a name. Graffiti discovered on one of the walls of Pompeii read "I love her whose number is 545."

Too many variables

The difficulty with this kind of gematria (as it is called) is that different names could have the same number. Furthermore, the same could be spelt in two different ways and thus yield two different numbers. Finally, the same name could be written in different alphabets, and thus yield different numbers depending on whether it was written in Hebrew or Greek. In short, while it is possible to deduce a number from a written name, it is virtually impossible to deduce a name from a number.

This has not prevented people from trying, however. The most popular guess is that 666 represents the name "Nero Caesar," which, if spelt in a particular way in Hebrew, adds up to the required total. The trouble with this identification is that it presupposes that the readers

Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
● Al Wolters

of the book of Revelation would know four things: 1) that the number was an example of gematria; 2) that the name had to be spelt in the Hebrew alphabet; 3) that a particular spelling (NRWNQSR) was to be used, and; 4) that it was this name, and not some other name adding up to 666, which was intended.

Symbol, not cryptogram

In my opinion, this whole approach is fruitless. With a little bit of ingenuity and a good head for figures (or, these days, a pocket calculator), it is possible to link the number 666 with almost anyone's favorite bogeyman. Various other Roman emperors have been proposed, as well as the Pope, the Roman Catholic Church, Luther, Napoleon, Hitler and Pierre Elliot Trudeau.

A marginally more plausible approach is one which looks at the number 666 as a symbol, not a cryptogram. Since the number seven in the Bible often represents fullness or perfection, the number 666 would represent a threefold falling short of perfection. Others have combined this symbolic approach with the numerical one. It was pointed out already in antiquity that the numerical value of the name Jesus, spelt "Iesous" in Greek, was 888. Thus perfection would be represented by 777, superlative perfection by 888, and consistent failure to reach perfection by 666.

The truth of the matter is that everyone is guessing, and that the persistent preoccupation with deciphering the riddle is missing the point. Discerning the beast of Revelation 13 in the concreteness of human history is not a matter of ingenious calculation, but of spiritual discernment, guided by the plain teaching of Scripture.

Al Wolters teaches religion and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. The address of Redeemer is 777 Garner Road East.

Anglican bishops call for renewed biblical understanding

James Solheim

DALLAS, Texas (ENS) — After a meeting in Dallas, a group of 50 Anglican bishops and archbishops from 16 nations issued a statement on Sept. 24 that drew direct links between the issues of international debt and sexual immorality, both likely topics at next summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops. The bishops also criticized churches in the First World for having drifted from their biblical moorings.

The statement said that "unbridled economic individualism"

has led "both to the break-up of families and the escalation of international debt." And it drew a direct tie between "concern for the social good of nations" by relieving the debt and promoting, "strong healthy families through faithful monogamous heterosexual relationships."

African bishops speak

The bishops, most of them from Africa, expressed gratitude for the statement by the Second Anglican Encounter in the South, which met at Kuala Lumpur last February, and its asser-

tion that "the integrity of our common witness is called into question because of new teaching and lapses in discipline relating to human sexuality occurring in parts of the North."

Drawing on Scripture's "consistent teaching" about marriage and the family, the bishops said, "We share in the affirmation that the biblical sexual norm is clear" and that "the church has no authority to set aside clear biblical teaching by ordaining non-celibate homosexuals or authorizing the blessing of same sex relationships."

Drawing a distinction between homosexual orientation and the gay agenda as a socio-political identity, the statement concluded, "It is not acceptable for a pro-gay agenda to be smuggled into the church's program or foisted upon our people — and we will not permit it."

Scripture bears on life

Citing the theological components of a "shared and coherent orthodox Anglican framework," the bishops identified issues that require "further reflection at this time in our com-

munion": "The centrality of the authority of the Scriptures in our understanding and interpretation of the world" and "the ministry of the obedient Christian community" in its "bearing witness to the power and adequacy of this understanding and interpretation of the world."

The four-day Anglican Life and Witness Conference was jointly sponsored by the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and the Ekklesia Society, a member of the American Anglican Council that stresses biblical orthodoxy.

If only the fly had hearkened!

Bert Witvoet

I'm sitting in our sunroom, reflecting on the sermon I heard this morning. A large housefly is making its presence known by buzzing against one of the skylights. Normally, in deference to my wife, I look for the fly swatter and, in spite of the sixth commandment, which tells me not to murder, and the fourth commandment, which urges me not to exert myself unduly on the Sabbath, I set out to exterminate the intruder. But today I refrain from this pro-choice activity, mainly because my wife is not in the room, but also because it's such a nice fall day outside that I want some of nature's delights to invade the indoors.

Actually I am not reflecting on the sermon so much as on part of the reading of Scripture this morning from Isaiah 48. Verse 18a of that chapter reads: "If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river." But the reader had not actually read the verse that way. He had said: "Only if you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river." He had said: "Only if....," whereas the verse reads: "If only...."

God's lament

The mistake had been unintentional, of course, but what a difference his misreading made for those who are sensitive to language. "Only if..." suggests a severe restriction: only if you had paid attention to my commands would you have had peace. But God did not say that. He said, "If only you had paid attention to my commands."

"If only" is a lament. It's as if God is saying, "Why didn't you pay attention? You could have had peace." The King James Version brings out this point very clearly: "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river." God is crying because of our disobedience. He knows that peace flows from obedience. It's a spiritual law, as immutable as the law of gravity. "If only you had not stepped over the cliff, you would still be alive."

Saying it the way the reader had read the verse this would sound like: "Only if you don't step over a cliff can you be alive." What a narrow-minded piece of advice to give to your children. You want to stay alive? Don't step over a cliff.

No conditional love

God is not in the business of restricting us that way. His love is not conditional: "Only if you do this will I give you peace." No, his love is abundant and overflowing. God wants us to have peace so badly that he weeps when we ruin our own lives.

Maybe it's because of this that I don't want to kill the fly. I hate to say to the fly: "Only if you fly outside can you stay alive, but now I must kill you." I'm too pro-life for that. Besides, I don't mind the buzzing of an insect trying to move towards the light.

A little later, the housefly descends, and wouldn't you know it, one of the cats got it. Too bad. "If only you had stayed outside," I mutter. "Your peace would have been like a river."

Jen VanderBeek

It was time to set them both free.

They have grown from looney-sized cuteness into mini-frisbees with powerful flippers and heads. They were going through pots of food pellets and captured crayfish and minnows at an astonishing rate. Five times in the past weeks they have manoeuvred over the edge of the tank and walked the bedroom rug as boldly and unnaturally as escaped convicts.

So it was time to set them free. The turtle keeper finally accepted it long after they began to tell it in their turtle way.

We drove to the Pinery where the river is a misnamed, long pond with a very mild current. In the bottom of the bucket the turtles propelled their noses into the hard plastic sides seeming to try to break through. In the back seat he bent his head over the rim of the bucket tucked between his knees.

The words he spoke to them were too soft for my ears. At the place where the grass and soil gave way to the water, we took a photo.

One turtle in each of his hands and a tentative smile on his face. Another picture a moment later of one in the water and one still in his hand. The last picture on the roll — two turtles resting, finally, quiet under a few inches of unbound water.

He could still change his mind. They were close enough to swoop up and plunk back in the bucket. He watched them, wondering out loud if the colder water was making them so still. Then one dug in its flippers burrowing in the ooze and weeds until it disappeared. The turtle keeper smiled and said that was a good sign.

Sure enough, a moment later, the burrower reappeared and flapped all four flippers swimming deep and away from the edge. The clear water made it easy to follow the turtle's path. A few feet further and the first turtle was almost invisible. Then it swam to the surface, looking not much bigger than a looney, and poked its pointed head up to the sky.

Turtles away

The second turtle sat still and unmoving on the bottom. He wondered out loud if maybe this one wasn't going to make it in the wild. What would it eat? Then the second turtle began to nibble the grass that lay beneath and beside and all around it. A minnow flitted by in the shadow and the second turtle scooted after it, opening wide its beak-like mouth. Captured lunch. The turtle keeper whooshed out a sigh announcing the surprising menu entre with pride: "Did you see that?"

We stayed a half hour, staring at the bottom of the water. We watched the first turtle surface five times. We thought we saw the second turtle twice.

Then he puffed out eleven years'-worth of bravery with his chest, hoisted the empty bucket and moved to the van. "Let's go. They'll be alright. I raised them as good as I could and God'll have to keep an eye on them for the rest."

I don't think he caught the lump in my throat.

On the way home he lay on the back seat quiet and unmoving. I wondered if he was going to make it.

"Mom, we should go for a walk there later,

kay?" We will.

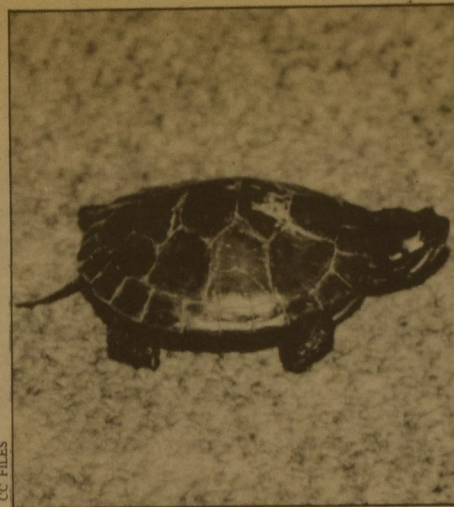
Letting go.... One day it will be my turn. For the turtle keeper is already starting to make the noises in his turtle keeper way. I'm still not listening, but one day I must. Then I'll be ready, for I've watched an example today.

And it awed me.

It caused me to feel again where the Creator Hands once held my shell, tipping my eagerness into the captivity of a freedom I had so desired. Eternal Hands that hover now above the water where I eat and swim and sleep and live. Loving Hands that felt every bump and weakness on my shell, and still let me go.

And that awed me, too.

Jen VanderBeek is an avid story writer who lives in Forest, Ont.



CC FILES

Sound advice for the Sunday morning sound technician

Robby Edwards

Squeal, hum — an embarrassing, pregnant pause while the congregation watches the pastor with his lips moving as if in a silent film, and when at last sound accompanies his words, an audible sigh is heard. Thus begins the morning's sermon.

Many people who attend church regularly have likely run across this unpleasant phenomenon. For congregant and speaker alike, these moments are mood-breaking, spirit-quenching, unholy de-railers of the trains of people's thoughts and transpire at the most "Murphyistic," inopportune moments. And we, like the Greeks before us who killed the messenger bearing bad news, look to the Sunday morning sound technician with unfulfilled intention.

The scowls, giving place to frustration, briefly transfigure those once worshipful faces. A few minutes later all is forgotten, that is, until the next audio-awkward moment strikes. People walk away, not speaking the praises of a life-changing message, but with comments about the sound.

Technology has taken over

Technology in the latter half of this century has overtaken the evangelical church with a vengeance. There is now often a need for trained technicians where once only pastors and organists were the principal staff.

Church ministry has been slow to bridge the technological troubled waters, partly because technology simply costs money. Even when budget is not a factor, visual aesthetics often take precedence over acoustics. Only after the "glass cathedral" is built is it discovered that the edifice is so reverberant that it is impossible to hear the message.

In a context in which the spoken word and music are so important, it seems odd that the vehicle that carries the message (the audio system) is often overlooked in favor of such niceties

as ceiling height and seat color.

There are some churches that have the combination of money and technological vision to address aesthetics and still install a state-of-the-art sound system, but most have a limited budget and can afford only a modest system.

Sound can be only as good as

tolerable and a good system seem great. Sadly, the opposite is also true; a great system, improperly run, can sound terrible.

Know your craft

To become a master you must know your craft. The pastor prepares sermons with, presumably, years of study be-

messages like "Breaker one nine"; "There is a pick-up for the Marriot at..."; or even sometimes nothing at all, including what you want to hear.

Exorcising the gremlins

The list of the victims of technology is a long one, and the often heard expression "gremlins in the system" takes on a whole new meaning for a Christian in Audioland.

Professional sound engineers, of which there are comparatively few in the church, have the experience to minimize various problems when they arise. Inexperienced volunteers, on the other hand, usually do not.

But because volunteers function as the atomic glue for most churches, they are the more likely candidates to be found turning knobs behind a sound console.

lot during their lives, the big trick in audio is to make the voices and instruments that are amplified through a sound system sound the way they do in real life — but a little or a lot louder.

The understanding of how that process works is the rub. If being an engineer were simply a matter of turning up a volume knob so that voice or instrument sounded the same but louder, life would be simple.

The environment, the speakers, the microphones, and even the mixing console, all add their own tonality and thereby complicate the whole affair. The sound person's job is to compensate for those variables so that the final product is listenable.

This principle is called "sound reinforcement." Just remember, if it's too loud, someone will tell you to turn it down. It is a simple principle that ears are the final criterion for mixing.

Know your equipment

If you are a Sunday morning sound technician, the place to start is with your system. Get to know it; make it your friend. Don't come in just minutes before the service to set up and test the system. Take some time when no one is around. Play a tape or CD and see what all the knobs do. Talk on a microphone and see if you can make it sound good for your own voice.

If you have a manual for your mixing console, this is a good time to figure out exactly what your board will do. Look at where the cables are patched (plugged) into the mixer. Find out where they go and thus how the board functions. This will help to trace out problems later.

Anticipate the problems with a little experimentation. Turn a microphone up louder than you normally would before people are there; you can gauge the trouble spots ahead of time (as when it feeds back, squealing horribly) and thus avoid them and the unhappy looks that they arouse.

Come prepared knowing, if possible, what the required setup is for that day, how the service will run, and then, be ready before the musicians and pastor arrive. They will love you for it. Become a master of sound technology and not its victim.



the person who runs the sound system. There is a story about a violinist who had an incredible instrument; people said that it was his violin that made him play so well. During a recital, suddenly before their eyes, and to their horror, he destroyed his instrument, dashing it on the stage. In the ensuing silence he stepped to the wings and reappeared with his renowned violin. He had smashed a cheap imitation, but in the master's hands, it had sounded superb.

In audio this is also true. An educated technician can make a bad audio system sound

hind him or her. The same is true of the musician or musicians who lead the worship. But the person who mixes the sound may have little or no training at all. This is an oversight, an underestimation of the complexity of the job. It is not as easy as it might sound. Try it.

Even for a knowledgeable, paid professional, there are those embarrassing moments of audio disaster. It happens. Things break. Wireless microphones seem particularly open to demonic influences. One often hears wheezings, rumblings or other overriding radio

Whether the Sunday morning technician is conscripted because he or she happens to work at the local electronics store, or is some brave soul who has voluntarily offered him- or herself as a living sacrifice, that person may be surprisingly overwhelmed by what appeared to be so simple a task.

To work in such a critical capacity without training is foolhardy. In today's arena of the technological church, knowledge is the best weapon.

Although most people can hear, and have used (and increasingly, abused) their ears a

Robby Edwards has been a concert sound engineer with 17 years touring experience, working both in the Christian and secular markets. He lives in Irvine, Calif.

Feature

Do we have a message for street people?

Steven Venhuizen

In a world in which everything seems to be changing and nothing seems to be absolute, we Christians are left wondering whether what we believe is any better or more effective than what anyone else believes. Do we have anything to offer this modern world? Is the gospel relevant in our contemporary culture? Is the Word of God, as we have received it and understood it, true?

I have a friend who I met in my work at a drop-in centre for street youth. His name is Wolfman; at least, that is the only name I know for him. I met Wolfman nearly six months ago. He presented himself in our centre with his booming, gravelly voice, a voice that punctuated each sentence with a four-letter expletive.

Ignorance and doubt

His presence, initially, was rather annoying to me and to many of our staff. Not only did his language make us Christians squeamish, but he seemed to have little regard for the safety and comfort of his peers. He be-

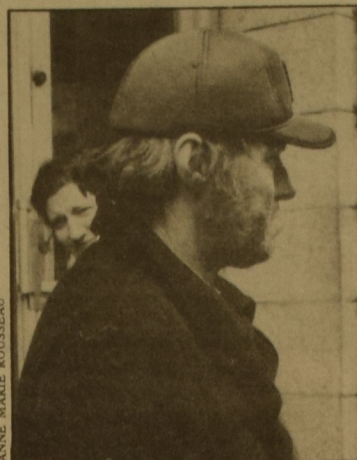
came increasingly aggressive and angry, and he threatened to physically hurt me if I continued to tell him what to do. However, just as things were seemingly about to erupt, Wolfman disappeared.

At first I sighed with relief. But after some time, when I knew that this muscular, street-smart guy was not going to return any time soon, I began to wonder whether, as a helping professional in a Christian mission, I had done my job very well.

After all, what did I know of this young man? He obviously was filled with some kind of anger and resentment that seemed to spill out onto everyone who crossed his path. But where had he come from? What had his life been like? Did he have any family? How was he surviving now? What gave him the courage and the strength to go on? Where did he see his life going? What were his goals, his dreams?

I could not answer any of these questions. I did not know anything of his story.

Just recently, however, I was



ANNE MARIE ROUSSEAU

again startled by the sound of that gravelly voice. Wolfman had returned. He had the same voice and the same means of punctuation. Little seemed to have changed in the months of his absence. He still made people uncomfortable. He still had the ability to raise the intensity level of a room from 0 to 10 in an instant.

My first reaction was to begin addressing his behaviors. His immediate response was to bristle. But he also showed restraint. I overheard him explain to his friends that he did

not want to be kicked out because he was depending on us for his meals. When his friends had gone, I told him that I would like him to be able to keep coming as well.

Something happened after

Something happened after that encounter. Wolfman still used coarse language, but he caught himself occasionally.

that encounter. Something was different. Wolfman still used coarse language, but he caught himself occasionally. He still kept most people on edge, but he clumsily attempted to portray a spirit of co-operation. When asked to help with a few small tasks, he seemed delighted. When invited out for a coffee, he accepted with a reply that expressed a tentative sense of self worth.

Sharing world views

After a few missed dates, we sat together in a coffee shop. I began to hear bits of his story. He began to tell me about the world as he sees it: the strongest fighter survives; marijuana and sex are the most one can hope for; a good day is when you don't have to fight but everyone is still afraid of you. Then he asked me what I thought. I told him that I believe that God who made everything is fixing all that is wrong, and that someday it is all going to be perfect. He shrugged his shoulders.

We talked about his early years: how he never met his real father; that his mother's boyfriend routinely beat him, because, as Wolfman put it, "I was there." He said that he did not trust anyone, especially adults. I thanked him for telling me that, and with a stunned look, he said being able to tell me that was probably more than he had ever trusted any adult.

Will to survive

We talked about the way he survives. He told me of the many places he has slept: roof tops, stair wells, parking garages, park benches. He described his intense hunger at times and the way he manages to find sustenance. He spoke proudly of surviving several winters on the street. After a pause, he despairingly stated that this was probably the way his life would always be.

I told him that I was impressed by the many ways he

had found to survive. He looked at me with a startled expression, and then he hesitantly said, "Yeah, I guess so."

He told me how much he enjoys smoking weed. He explained that he gets terrible headaches, and the marijuana is the only thing that relieves the pain. He also admitted that being high made it much easier to deal with every-day life. I responded with some agreement. I told him that he was right, his experience of life is not the way it is supposed to be. His response was silence.

Two days later I heard Wolfman was seriously beaten. Since I did not know his real name, I could not locate him in the hospitals. I do not know where he is or what his condition might be. I do know that in a small yet significant way, something was happening.

Is theology relevant? Does the Bible make sense in our modern culture? Do Christians have anything to say to hurting and searching people, people who do not know Jesus? Yes.

Wolfman heard something of another story; he encountered another way of looking at his life and his world. He encountered an understanding of things that seemed to intuitively make sense.

Confidence in the message

The old story and the way it informs us about God, ourselves, creation, and present problems gives us much to say. Focusing on the old story helps us see ourselves within God's story. It encourages us to see ourselves as something other than fiercely autonomous individuals.

The way we tell this story may vary. We may display it only in our deeds. We may speak of it only in snatches as it relates to circumstances. We may not know the truth's full extent, but that need not make us shrink. We speak of what we know.

The Bible shows us the truth about God, ourselves and the creation. Those who speak the truth in prayer and depend on the leading of the Holy Spirit, can expect to be shown. With that disposition we can confidently speak the truth to the longings of this age.

Steven Venhuizen is a graduate of Calvin Theological Seminary, has a masters of theological studies degree from the Institute for Christian Studies and has been working with street youth at Yonge Street Mission for three and a half years.

FROM COAST TO COAST

ENGLISH RADIO:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan - CKAY	10:00am	1500
Burns Lake - CFLD	9:15am	1400
Kitimat - CKTK	8:30am	1230
Osoyoos - CJOR	8:00am	1490
Penticton - CKOR	8:00am	800
Port Alberni - CJAV	7:00pm	1240
Prince George - CIRX	7:00am	94.3
Princeton - CHOR	8:00am	1400
Smithers - CFBV	9:15am	1230
Summerland - CHOR	8:00am	1450
Vernon - CJIB	9:30pm	940

QUEBEC

Montreal - CIBC	7:30am	600
Montreal - CKGM	9:00am	990

ALBERTA

Brooks - CIBQ	8:00am	1340
Ft. McMurray - CJOK	8:30am	1230
High River - CHRB	6:30pm	1280
Edmonton - CKER	11:00pm	101.9

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan - CJSL	8:00am	1280
Weyburn - CFSL	8:00am	1190

MANITOBA

Altona - CFAM	9:30am	950
Steinbach - CHSM	9:30am	1250
Winnipeg - CKJS	9:15am	810

ONTARIO

Atikokan - CFAK	9:30am	1240
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Chatham - CFCO	6:30am	630
Fort Frances - CFOB	9:30am	640
Guelph - CJOY	8:30am	1460
Hamilton - CHAM	7:30am	820
Kapuskasing - CKAP	7:00am	580
Kingston - WLKC	7:30am	100.7
Newmarket - CKDX	9:30am	88.5
Oshawa - CKDO	8:00am	1350
Owen Sound - CFOS	10:30am	560
Pembroke - CHVR	10:00am	96.7
St. Catharines - CKTB	7:30pm	610
Samia - CHOK	7:30am	1070
Stratford - CJCS	8:45am	1240
Windsor - CKLW	8:30am	580
Wingham - CKNX	10:30am	920
Woodstock - CKDK (fm)	8:00am	102.3

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John - CHSJ	9:30am	700
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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown - CFCY	7:00am	630
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NOVA SCOTIA

Digby - CKDY	6:00am	1420
Kentville - CKEN	8:30am	1490
Middleton - CKAD	8:30am	1350
New Glasgow - CKEC	7:30am	1320
Sydney - CJCB	8:00am	1270
Weymouth - CKDY	8:30am	103.1
Windsor - CFAB	8:30am	1450

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Ontario & Quebec 7:00 & 10:00pm
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Nothing Sacred is nothing special

Marian Van Til

Nothing Sacred

ABC, Thursdays, 8 p.m. EST. Stars Kevin Anderson. Executive producers David Manson and Richard Kramer.

There's a new TV drama on the ABC network which has been generating controversy. It's called *Nothing Sacred*, and it focusses on a Catholic inner-city parish where an unorthodox young priest who runs the soup kitchen is the main character.

Several other priests and a nun are auxiliary characters.

The trailers for the show (ads to entice you to watch it) which ran on ABC at the end of the summer were intriguing. They depicted bustling city streets which were then overlaid with the printed question: "Where is God in this picture?" More modern city scenes, then the question: "Don't see him?" More scenes, then: "Haven't found him yet?" Then a shot of a young priest in the midst of the city, with the statement: "This man can find him."

God in all of life?

Hmmm, I thought: a show that's going to acknowledge that God has something to do with the daily affairs of modern life. What a novel concept for Hollywood!

The first episode, however, removed any illusions about a meaningful all-of-life-is-religion notion in the show; and the second episode confirmed that. Instead, one gets the sense that the writers are probably lapsed Catholics, refugees from the



Kevin Anderson is Father Ray in *Nothing Sacred*

'60s who weren't quite done being "anti-establishment" and who had transferred hostile or at least ambivalent feelings from politics to religion.

In their presumably newly discovered "spirituality" the writers and producers launch naively into a potpourri of the theological-social questions that Christians have been encountering in the last 30 years and longer, and present their own superficial (and politically correct) answers to these questions. The most controversial of those issues relate to abortion and gay relationships.

Mixed bag

There was a feeling of ar-

tificiality about Episode 1. Father Ray, the young priest, is thrown one crisis and contradiction after another. For example, he's sure of his calling, he says; then in a sermon he questions God's very existence. Seriously struggling with his calling as a priest would have been a legitimate and potentially dramatic subject; but his announcement about his doubts about God comes across merely as a plot contrivance

which appears out of nowhere, and as quickly disappears.

Early on, the priest re-meets a woman who had been his lover before he became a priest and he considers resuming their relationship. He doesn't. This scene rings true: he struggles with the sexual feelings and loneliness rekindled in himself but makes a conscious decision to control those feelings and remain true to his priestly commitment.

Meanwhile, however, he violates his church's teachings by telling a pregnant teenager who comes to the confessional that she should "follow her heart" on the issue of whether to get an abortion or not, and he's con-

stantly butting heads with heartless, unseen, unnamed church authorities who inexplicably want to shut down his soup kitchen.

The priest as "rebel" is compassionate, "with it" and never hypocritical. The implication is that the Catholic Church is the antithesis of those things.

Vague faith

The pre-season trailers notwithstanding, faith here turns out to be a pretty vague commodity. The most glaring omission is Christ. He is altogether absent in Episode 1 and only obliquely mentioned in Episode 2. Undoubtedly, Hollywood thought, talking about Christ would offend viewers who don't believe he is the only Savior.

It seems rather difficult to do a series like this without Christ having a continuing role, but this show manages. Even the soup kitchen comes across more as a secular social service than as a ministry of Christian compassion. With no Savior, the heart of the matter has vanished; no wonder "vague" is the word that continually comes to mind here.

'Propaganda' as entertainment

While some of the negative reaction to the show has been knee-jerk, it's not hard to see why committed Catholics and many other Christians are disturbed by it.

The Evangelical Press News Service has quoted William A. Donohue, head of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights as saying that *Nothing*

Sacred is "pure propaganda for Catholic malcontents."

And EP quotes Alan Keyes, an advisory board member of the Catholic League, as calling the program "propaganda dressed up as entertainment, the way the Nazis used to make movies. The entertainment elite's belief that there are no moral absolutes deeply contradicts the religious view of Christianity."

The League called for a boycott of the show's sponsors and at least eight companies almost immediately pulled their sponsorship (Weight Watchers International, American Isuzu Motors, Sears, Kmart, Benckiser, Red Lobster, Corian and Ocean Spray).

Conservative Protestants have joined the fray too. Focus on the Family has joined the boycott, and James Dobson, Focus's president, has said the program "breaks new ground for its irreverence and for the way it depicts Christians," EP reports.

While secular critics have generally lauded *Nothing Sacred* (it's true the acting's not bad), the Christians who are actively opposing it may not need to worry. Despite the hullabaloo, it seems the show isn't terribly popular.

In its debut week, EP reports, it was "the lowest-rated regular series on the top four [U.S.] networks, falling in 92nd place for the week, according to the Nielsen Ratings, which gave the program a 4.4 rating" (representing 980,000 households, or one per cent of the U.S.'s estimated 98 million TV homes).

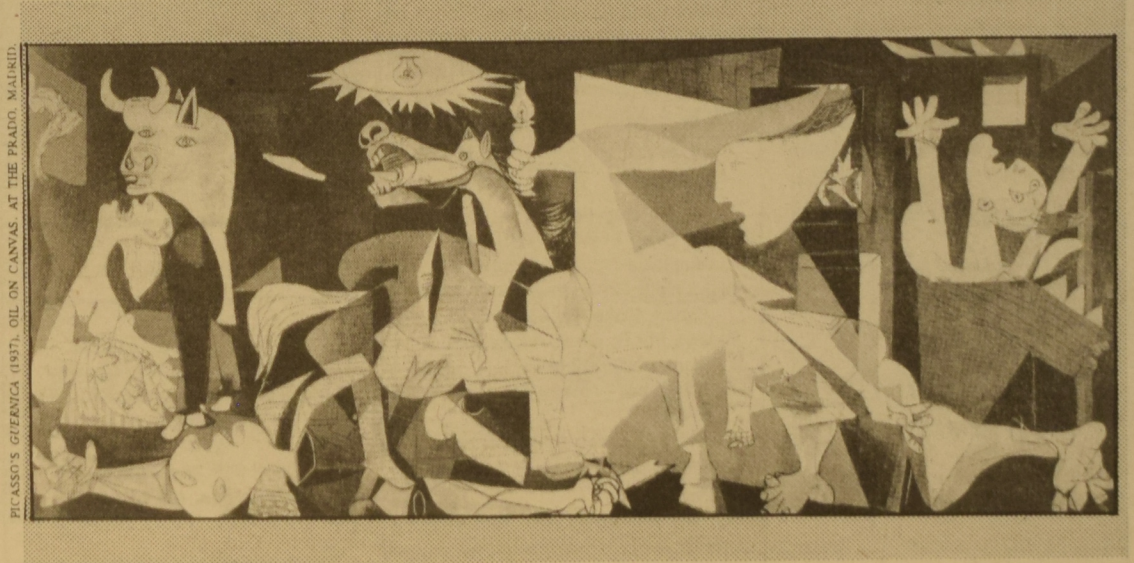
Record corporate gift to National Gallery brings Picasso to Canada

OTTAWA (Canadian Scene) — Described as the largest gift ever to be made to Canada's National Gallery for an exhibition, a donation of \$500,000 from the financial services company Midland Walwyn will bring a major Picasso exhibition to Ottawa next April.

Hundreds of thousands of visitors to the nation's capital will be able to view 100 paintings, sculptures, drawings and prints by Spanish painter Pablo Picasso whose vast output and pioneering of modernism made his name one of the most recognizable in the history of world art. The exhibition is drawn from the collection owned by New York's Museum of Modern


Art, one of the world's greatest Picasso collections. It will be on display from April 3 to July 12, 1998. It is expected that attendance may surpass the 240,000 who saw the Renoir exhibition at the National Gallery this year.

The donation will enable the National Gallery to present special school programs and the gallery can offer and expanded range of educational tours, programs and activities for students. "There is no doubt that Picasso's towering presence, unbridled imagination and dramatic uniqueness set him apart from all other artists of the 20th century," said Robert B. Schultz, chief executive officer of Midland Walwyn.



PICASSO'S GUERNICA (1937), OIL ON CANVAS, AT THE PRADO, MADRID.

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(Revised February 1, 1995) Births \$25.00 Marriages & Engagements \$40.00 Anniversaries \$45.00 2-column anniversaries . \$90.00 Obituaries \$45.00 Notes of thanks \$35.00 Birthdays \$40.00 All other one-column classified advertisements: \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00. Letter under file number \$35.00 extra. Photos: \$25.00 additional charge. Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive ATTENTION! a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion. c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original. d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements. e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.). NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address. Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313	WASSENAAR: <i>90 Years Young and still knitting!</i> It is with profound joy that we celebrate the 90th birthday of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother MAARTJE WASSENAAR As a wife and mother, she worked very hard for her family. No effort was spared and no chore was too exacting in caring for her family. Over the years she has knitted countless sweaters for her children, grandchildren, and also for those less fortunate. She continues to take a keen interest in the lives of her offspring. We are very grateful that she and her husband can join with us in celebrating this happy occasion on November 4. <i>She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands... She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed.</i> Proverbs 31. Andy (deceased 1995) & Emmy Wassenaar — Samia Siek & Tena Wassenaar — Stouffville Vivian & Klaas De Jong — Wyoming Sy & Mary Wassenaar — Toronto Kathy Wassenaar (deceased 1968) Tina Wassenaar — Toronto 18 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren. Maartje and her husband Lieuwe reside at Holland Christian Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Apt. C1101, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7	1952 November 13 1997 "...what God has put together let no man put assunder" With thankfulness to the Lord, we are happy to announce, D.V., the 45th anniversary of our parents and grandparents JOHN TIM and ANNA HESSELS (nee DOGGEN) Henry & Connie Melissa, Craig, Lucy, Angelo John Al & Liz Chris, Kim, Calvin, Kandace Ted & Yvonne Wesley, Nicole, Trevor, Ashley Rick & Teresa Eli, Ian, Kayla Dave & Edna Vicki, Danielle Ken & Pam We invite you to share in this joyful occasion at an open house on Thursday, Nov. 13, 1997, from 8 to 10 p.m., in the Wellandport Chr. School. Home address: 74078 Wellandport Rd., Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0, (905) 386-7324.	 1952 September 29 1997 With praise and thanks to God, we, the children and grandchildren, announce the 45th wedding anniversary of JACK and SIPPI VANDERHORN (nee LUINSTRA) on Sept. 29, 1997. Lynn & Bill Vording — Embro Scott, Steve, Shawn John & Sharry VanderHom — Embro Jenny, Nancy, Brian Frances Crown & Andre — Woodstock James, Justin, Stacey Sandra & Terry Murray — Embro Jordan, Nicholas You are invited to an open house in their honor on Saturday, Nov. 15, 1997 , at the Royal Canadian Legion, Embro, Ont., from 2-4 p.m. Home address: R.R. #2, Embro, ON N0J 1J0	June 1, 1913 - Oct. 14, 1997 "He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live" (John 11: 25, 26). The Lord took home WILLIAM R. HAAN Beloved husband of Maaikie Haan-Couperus. Lovingly remembered by his children and grandchildren. Correspondence address: 62 Deblaquiere St. N., Port Hope, ON L1A 2K9
		1947 November 12 1997 With praise and thanksgiving to God, we joyfully announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents CHRIS and ALI TROELSTRA (nee VAN BARNEVELD) We thank them for their love and support and pray that God will continue to bless them richly. With love from their children and grandchildren. Berta & Marten den Haan — Abbotsford, B.C. Elena & Rob, Chris Anka & Terry Manders — Summerland, B.C. David, Graham Audrey & Pearse Walsh — Nelson, B.C. Tim, Adrian, Ashlyn, Meaghan Pete & Irene Troelstra — Langley, B.C. Chris, Jennifer Cheryl & Wayne Wyatt — Terrace, B.C. Chris & Mandy, Mark & Tiffany, Alyssa, Brian, Sarah Elizabeth & John Van Dyk — Langley, B.C. Stephanie, Erica, Benjamin Home address: 4704 Walsh Avenue, Terrace, BC V8G 1Y6	Interested in placing an ad? Get in touch with us for details.	Psalm 23 On Oct. 11, 1997, in his 92nd year, the Lord took home our dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather WILLEM SCHINKEL His quiet faith in his Lord never wavered. Predeceased by his wife of 66 years Anna Marie (Aug. 23, 1996). He will be lovingly remembered by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Jack & Rose Schinkel — Renfrew, Ont. Bob & Eva Schinkel — London, Ont. Tina & Bill Doelman — Ottawa, Ont. Gerda Huibers — Brockville, Ont. Jerry & Manja Schinkel — Pierrefonds, Que. MaryAnne & Henry Venema — Cobden, Ont. Audrey & Cor Schijff — Navan, Ont. Bill Schinkel & Dawn — White Lake, Ont. David & Linda Schinkel — Brockville, Ont. 24 grandchildren and 34 great-grandchildren. Correspondence address: Mrs. A. Schijff, 4000 Milton Rd., Navan, ON K4B 1H8
	Anniversaries 1947 November 5 1997 With thankfulness to God, we are happy to announce the 50th anniversary of our parents and grandparents JOB and DINY BROBBEL (nee RIETVELD) Love and congratulations from your children and grandchildren, Lena & George Eenling — Prince Albert, Ont. Nadine, Jason, Sarah Adrian & Marilyn Brobbel — Picton, Ont. Mark & Lisa, Michael, Julie, Yvonne Thea & Peter Eenling — Courtice, Ont. Nicole Wilf & Hetty Brobbel — Fenton, Mo. Simon, Carie, Ginelle Peter & Pat Brobbel — Ajax, Ont. Cory, Kelly, Kristy John Brobbel — Kitchener, Ont. Randy We wish you the Lord's continued blessings on this day and for many more years. Home address: 104 Homefield Square, Courtice, ON L1E 1L1		Miscellaneous GOING TO HOLLAND FOR VACATION? Why not rent a VACATION APARTMENT and visit family and sight-see at your leisure. CENTRALLY LOCATED near APELDOORN. Year-round accommodations. FOR BROCHURE OR MORE INFORMATION CALL Harold or Nellie at (905) 985-7891 or fax us at (905) 985-3007 e-mail: harnel@direct.com	Church News Christian Reformed Church Calls accepted: — Richard VanderVaart of Saskatoon, Sask., to Wallaceburg, Ont., ending a four-year vacancy. Classis meeting: — Classis Chatham of the CRC will meet in regular session, D.V., on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 1998, in the Good News CRC, London, Ont. All materials for the agenda must be in the office of the stated clerk by Monday, Dec. 15, 1997. Jan Il G. Vandergeest, Stated Clerk.
		Personal ONE TO ANOTHER Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue \$5. Write to: #12 923 2nd Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7	For Rent CLINTON, ONTARIO ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES available, 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call (519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.	Look for our CALENDAR of EVENTS on page 19...

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Second Chr. Ref. Church of Brampton, Ont., is seeking ordained CRC pastors for its **ministry to the aging at Holland Christian Homes (HCH)** on either full-time or part-time basis. HCH is a full-care facility of 700+ residents of which 320 are members of the Second CRC. Our present ministry is carried out by one full-time and two part-time chaplains. Both our part-time chaplains are retiring. Ability to minister and preach in Dutch is a necessity. You would be an associate pastor of the Second CRC with some involvement in the congregation related to preaching, vacation relief and possibly some ministry to the elderly who are not residents at HCH. If you feel called to this challenging and rewarding ministry, please send letter of interests and resume by December 12, 1997, to the **Chairman of Council, Mr. Ted Bruinsma, 96 Elgin Drive, Brampton, ON L6Y 2E8. Phone: (905) 457-2096.**

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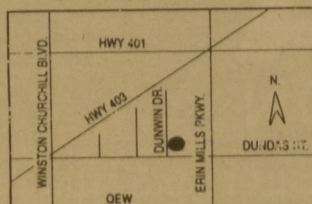
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Knox College Chapel
59 St. George Street, Toronto

Reception following at ICS (229 College Street, Second Floor)

40th Anniversary

Christian Reformed Church, Burnaby, B.C.

Members and friends of Burnaby Chr. Ref. Church will celebrate 40 years of God's blessings. A special service of thanksgiving and praise will be held on Sunday, November 16, 1997, at 10:30 a.m. The Saturday evening before, November 15, we will have a coffee and dessert social of entertainment and fellowship. All former members and friends are invited to join us in our celebration.

Miscellaneous

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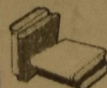
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**Insert YOUR message in our special
1997 Christmas Issue**

In past years we have supplied members of Christian Reformed churches across Canada with a free copy of the annual Christmas Issue. This year we plan to do the same. Date of this issue will be December 5. It will be mailed to our regular subscribers on December 2.

In addition, we plan to distribute close to 20,000 copies of this issue to Reformed Christians across Canada free of charge.

To print so many extra copies costs money. We are appealing to the business community and to Christian organizations to help us out. Feel free to include your annual Christmas greetings in your ads, as you have done before.

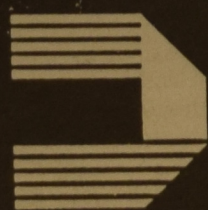
Please do not wait! Contact Stan de Jong by phone at (905) 682-8311 or fax (905) 682-8313 to obtain a rate sheet or to give your instructions.

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**Deadline for advertisements in this special issue is
November 19, 1997.**

An Anniversary coming up? Please note...

If you would like to place an anniversary announcement please note the dates that *Christian Courier* does not publish a paper (see page 5, publication box). Please keep in mind the date of the anniversary and the open house, if there is one. **Ten days before the issue date** all copy should be in. This will avoid the disappointment of people being informed too late about an anniversary date or open house of dear friends.



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(NC)—An area of the brain called substantia nigra contains cells which produce a chemical called dopamine. With the death of these cells, and the resultant deficiency of dopamine, there is an interference in the transmission of messages between the nerve cells which makes initiating movement difficult. Parkinsons is not thought to be inherited. Research studies are in progress to determine possible causes when it affects more than one family member. It is not contagious.

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Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

- Nov. 2** Combined worship service of the Beamsville, Grimsby and Fruitland CRCs, 2:30 p.m., Fruitland Alliance Church, Hwy. 8, **Fruitland**, Ont. Speaker: The Back to God Hour's new director, Dr. Calvin Bremer. Topic: "The Church's Cry." Participating are the Smithville DCHS Band and Choir. All welcome!
- Nov. 5** What do the Jewish Passover and Jesus' Last Supper have in common? Find out by attending the presentation "Christ in the Passover" at 7 p.m., Grace CRC (660 S. Pelham), **Welland**, Ont. Andrew Barron of "Jews for Jesus" will be the speaker. For youth and adults. Free will offering. Info.: (905) 892-5472
- Nov. 6** Calvin College's Chris Stoffel Overvoorde presents an art exhibit, "Alberta Mountains," featuring oil paintings. At 8 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Show starts Nov. 6 and runs to Dec. 4. Info.: (905) 648-2131.
- Nov. 7** Christian Festival Concert by the 100-voice choir and concert band of the Ont. Chr. Music Assembly, with special guests from Europe, under the direction of Leendert Kooij. At 8 p.m., Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, Ont. For tickets/info. call (416) 636-9779 (#).
- Nov. 8-9** Fortieth anniversary of the Immanuel CRC, **Simcoe**, Ont. Banquet and program on Saturday. Special worship service at 10 a.m. on Sunday. Info.: (519) 583-2476 (#)
- Nov. 9** Dutch worship service led by Rev. R. Praamsma, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.
- Nov. 15** Concert by the "Crusaders Male Choir," with various instrumental selections, 7:30 p.m., First CRC, **Barrie**, Ont. Tickets at the door.
- Nov. 15** York Music Fest, a concert featuring Willem Van Suijdam on the new Content organ, the Adoramus-Maranatha Choir, soprano Jody O'Hara, and pianist Paul De Boer. Audience participation. At 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, King St., **York**, Ont. Tickets/Info.: (905) 765-6124 or 765-4244.
- Nov. 16** Frisian worship service led by Rev. John D. Hellinga, 3 p.m., Chr. Ref. Church, **Mt. Brydges**, Ont. Info.: (519) 264-2362 (#).
- Nov. 16** Special worship service in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the CRC, **Burnaby**, B.C., at 10:30 a.m. Coffee/dessert social on Nov. 15. All welcome! (#)
- Nov. 21** J.S. Bach's "Magnificat" and other selected works will be performed by the RC Concert Choir, accompanied by orchestra, at Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Don't miss this! Info./tickets: (905) 648-2131.
- Nov. 22** Giant bazaar, 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Calvin Memorial Chr. School, 300 Scott St., **St. Catharines**, Ont. Children's games, baked goods, crafts and plants. Lunch, tea, supper are served. Fashion show at 2 p.m. Auction at 7 p.m. Info.: (905) 641-8872.
- Nov. 22** "Finding the Light" conference on abuse, from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., East CRC, **Strathroy**, Ont. Keynote speaker: Beth Swagman. Info.: (519) 245-0253 or 245-0139.
- Dec. 4-6** The RC Theatre Arts Dept. presents its fall mainstage production of "Scrooge... and other Yuletide Yarns," directed by Kip Edinborough Longstaff. At Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. **Dec. 4-5:** 7:30 p.m.; **Dec. 6:** 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Info./tickets: (905) 648-2131.
- Dec. 14** Dutch worship service led by Rev. J. Groen, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

News

MCCers helped 'lay' groundwork for Labrador's only egg producers

Carol Thiessen

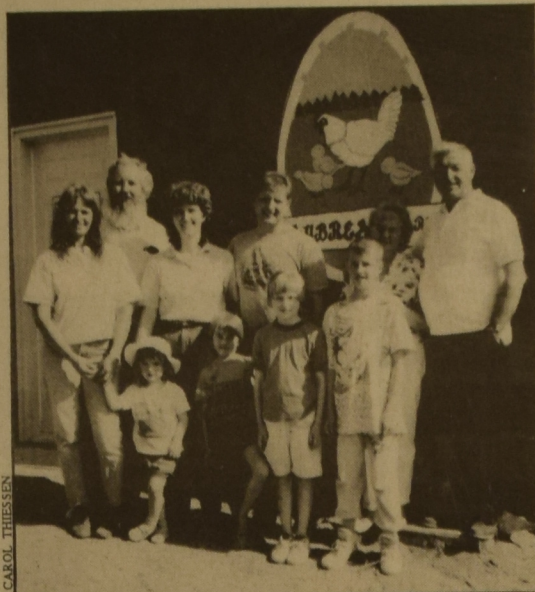
HAPPY VALLEY, Lab. (MCC) — When Lem and Darla Seaward decided to become egg producers in their hometown of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, they were searching for a simpler, family-oriented life-style.

What they got were years of red tape that often confounded them and threatened to kill their dream of a barn-full of contented chickens in this sparsely populated, isolated region of Newfoundland. But the Seawards doggedly persisted and in mid-July they shipped their first load of eggs to the local market. They can now proudly claim that their enterprise is the only egg-producing operation in Labrador.

Roadblocks everywhere

For Darla, who was raised in a farm family in Illinois, the venture seemed strewn with enough roadblocks to discourage even the most optimistic person. "Most people just lose energy. I mean, we've been at this seven years," she said.

The Seawards met back in 1984 when Darla — working as



Darla and Lem Seaward (centre), with their four children and opening day support crew: Lem's parents (right) and Brian and Irene Elliot (left), of MCC-New Brunswick.

a teacher under Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Truro, Nova Scotia — attended an MCC retreat in Labrador. Lem, who grew up in this northeastern region of Canada, acted as recreational guide at the retreat. They married the next year and settled in Labrador.

Over the years the Seawards, who attend a Salvation Army church in Goose Bay, have befriended numerous MCC volunteers, sharing meals, taking them fishing, berry picking and more.

They have also relied greatly on their MCC friends. Mark and Sonia Bromley, former MCC workers in Labrador, helped put together the business plan for the chicken operation. Other MCC volunteers

helped with the barn raising. "In doing this project, so many people have passed through and given encouragement," says Lem.

He had worked as a carpenter for years but grew tired of the competition for work. The Seawards, who have four young

children, wanted a change.

As it turned out, making the decision was the easy part. They feel like they've dealt with just about every government department to get the necessary leases and meet the seemingly endless regulations. And they're not home-free yet. It could take years to obtain permission to live on their farm land, which they can lease, but never own.

To obtain a farm lease from the provincial government, the Seawards had to produce a suitable business plan. Then, they waited for the quota — necessary for supply-managed products like eggs and milk.

The wait almost cost them the land because they couldn't fulfil the terms of their land lease without it.

The land they chose to farm needed clearing, which meant permits and stumpage payments for every tree they cut down. Then they had to coax the appropriate departments to put in a serviceable road and install electrical power.

'We like punishment'

Lem says it took a couple of years to construct the barn because they cut their own lumber and built their own roof trusses. They weren't allowed to do that on the farm, so they trucked in the finished trusses.

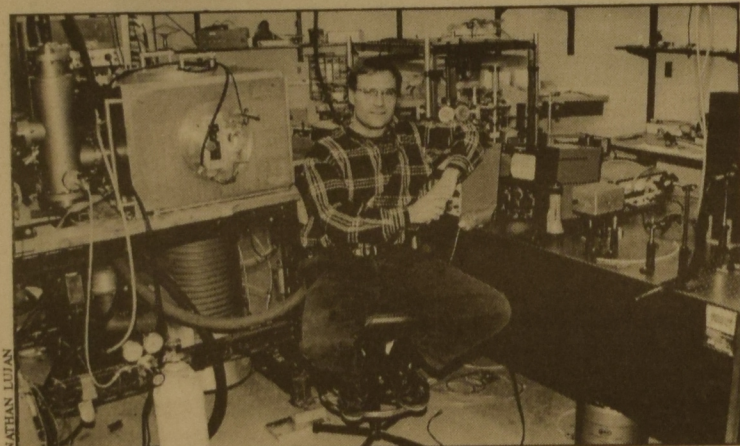
"We like punishment," says Darla, with a laugh, explaining that the people of Labrador are resilient and self-sufficient.

With permits in hand, and the farm loan arranged, the Seawards brought in their 5,000 hens by truck from New Brunswick, and are buying feed from Nova Scotia. Now they need a toe-hold in the Labrador market, which has up to now been supplied with eggs from neighboring provinces.

Some other farmers have tried egg-producing operations in Labrador and failed. But Lem and Darla are the first to have a federally inspected grading station to grade their own eggs, which they believe will help them. Still, Lem isn't naive. "It's going to be tight for the first couple of years."

But he doesn't take kindly to being told he's doing the impossible. "Overall, I think it will come out OK in the end." The determined Labradorian is already scheming about how he'll increase their quota and move on to new agricultural ventures. "I do believe agriculture in Labrador is going to blossom."

Calvin physics prof part of Nobel prize-winning work; has breakthrough piece of equipment at Calvin



Dr. Matt Walhout with the Nobel Prize-related apparatus.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Calvin College physics professor Matt Walhout learned on Oct. 15 that his PhD mentor had won the 1997 Nobel Prize for physics.

Dr. William D. Phillips of the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, Maryland, was given the prize jointly with Steven Chu of Stanford University in California and Claude Cohen-Tannoudji of College de France and Ecole Normale Supérieure in France.

The trio was awarded the \$1 million Nobel Prize in physics for its "development of methods to cool and trap atoms with laser light." They "contributed greatly to increasing our knowledge of the interplay between radiation and matter" and their research "may lead to the design of more precise atomic clocks for use in space navigation and accurate determination of position," said the citation from the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, which awards the prize.

Matt Walhout did his doctoral

work in atomic and laser physics under William Phillips, and worked with Phillips from 1989 to 1994 at NIST on the kind of research which led to Phillips' Nobel Prize.

The apparatus that Phillips used when he made his Nobel Prize breakthroughs is now at Calvin. Phillips donated the equipment to Walhout just before Walhout left NIST for Calvin two years ago. Says Walhout, "He knew I needed help getting started at Calvin, so he gave me the apparatus.... Our students will be able to work on equipment that has a place in Nobel Prize history — although I'm a little worried that now NIST might want it back!"

Walhout is using that equipment as the centerpiece of an atomic and laser physics lab that he's establishing at Calvin, a lab in which lasers will be used to trap krypton atoms and cool them to near absolute zero.

William Phillips was at the college just nine days before the Nobel Prize was announced for a lecture that drew some 250 people, and to speak at two physics department seminars.

News Digest

The Cat in the Hat comes back

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — The Cat in the Hat, Horton the Elephant, Yertle the Turtle and other fanciful creations of Dr. Seuss will be featured in a memorial to the popular children's author. Springfield, Mass., the hometown of Theodor Seuss Geisel, known to millions of children as Dr. Seuss, will house the memorial which will feature six bronze sculptures of characters from his books, reports the *Toronto Star*.

The centerpiece will be statues of Horton, Sam from *Green Eggs and Ham*, and other characters emerging from an open book. Geisel's stepdaughter, Lark Grey Dimond-Cates, a sculptor, will create the bronzes, which will encircle the town library. The cost of the project, expected to be completed by the summer of 1999, is estimated at \$4 million to \$6 million (US).

Quebec pumpkins win

NORWALK, Conn. (AP) — When it comes to growing giant pumpkins, two Quebecers can't be beaten. The father-and-son duo of Todd and Nathan Kline from Sawville, Que., won both first and second place by a wide margin in mid-October in the Connecticut Biggest Pumpkin Contest.

Todd Kline took first spot and \$2,000 (US) in prize money with a pumpkin weighing 364 kg, while his son, Nathan, took second prize money of \$1,000 for his 349-kg pumpkin.

The biggest Connecticut-grown pumpkin weighed 212 kg, earning third place and a \$750 prize for Wayne Hachney of Brookfield, Conn.

Dog days

RIVERDALE, N.J. — Recently, a judge in Morris County, New Jersey, ordered Joseph Petracca, 61, to shut down his unlicensed Riverdale "kennel," in which he housed the 100 German shepherds to which he admitted he had become "addicted." The court order will probably end Petracca's work of trying to breed the "perfect dog," reports *Universal Press Syndicate*. Said the judge, "When you are addicted to dogs, alcohol or drugs, you seek treatment."